

COM-10

NRO DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

12 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments on Dr. McMillan's Memorandum
on Implementation of the Purcell
Panel Recommendations

REFERENCE: Memorandum for CIA from D/NRO, 11 September
1963, Implementation of the Purcell Panel
Recommendations, [REDACTED] 5429-63

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1. The most significant feature of this document is its total reliance on Air Force views and programs in framing the NRO response. As far as we can learn, no one in CIA was contacted to help in the preparation of this response. The conclusion we reach is that satellite reconnaissance has been assigned almost exclusively to the Air Force in the minds of McMillan and the NRO Staff.

2. Our principal CIA inhouse effort thus far in responding to the Purcell Report has been focused on improving the CORONA M/J search capability. I called McMillan this morning and offered to make this work available to him in its present unpolished status, as it reaches quite different conclusions than those imposed by the Air Force on phases 1 and 2. Since McMillan was quite relaxed about receiving this work, I summarized its results over the telephone so that he could have it in mind before committing himself to the Clifford Board. Again, we find ourselves unsolicited in an area where we were known to be placing a major effort.

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3. The second paragraph of answer one on p.1 implies that LANYARD is a substitute for present or advanced area coverage systems (CORONA M/J or M/2 and [REDACTED]). While the 40 mile square frame taken by LANYARD can be placed anywhere over a fairly wide strip, it does not provide a capability to photograph all of a wide swath - either laterally or along the track - as do the CORONA systems. LANYARD, [REDACTED] and OXCART are in competition with each other - but not with the CORONA search series.

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Subject: Purcell Panel 2

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There is undoubtedly a valid question whether we should tighten up CORONA M/J ala Purcell or choose a totally new camera (M-2 or [REDACTED] system to improve search resolution. However, this has nothing to do with LANYARD.

4. On the question of improving peak resolution of CORONA M/J, I suggest that you reserve your position until we have found a chance to brief you and McMillan on the results of CIA's study.

5. The development of a standardized objective test of resolution quality is one of the major needs as we see it. In our view, an on-line automatic measure of resolution, image motion, etc., is both essential and possible. In other words, we believe it possible to build a machine through which the entire film strip could be passed which would measure these performance parameters continuously and rapidly. The reciprocal edge spread measurements are poor substitutes for this need, and do not separate out image motion, which in turn dictates the need for further vehicle stabilization improvements (see p.2). The list of Air Force contracts in this area does not indicate a significantly advanced activity, such as the one recommended by Purcell or that they will push forward.

6. The thrust of my comments is to identify the effective termination of CIA/AF partnership in the satellite reconnaissance business and suggest several limitations of the resulting sole-source reliance. OSA is now working on comments for you, but it is impossible to evaluate in a single day a large program constructed over several months with which we have had no prior contact.

Original signed by
[REDACTED]

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science and Technology)

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